

# INDIAN CONVERTS OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD, IN NEW-ENGLAND

*Experience Mayhew*



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Indian Converts Martha's Vineyard Experience Mayhew

This work is actually two "essays" which circulated together, one added to the other. The first, *Indian converts: or, Some account of the lives and dying speeches of a considerable number of the Christianized Indians of Martha's Vineyard, in New-England*, is written by Experience Mayhew. Experience was one in a long line of missionary ministers to the Wampanoag Indians on Martha's Vineyard. This work is essentially a treasure trove of small biographies of Native Americans and their amazing faith in God, despite enormous persecution by their fellow man. Experience retells the stories of Native American "godly ministers" (pastors and the like), "other good men," "religious women," and "of pious young persons." Experience knew the native language as if it was his own since he had lived side by side with the Wampanoag all his life, therefore, each account is first hand or from Native American sources. The second work is an essay added as an appendix by Thomas Prince, a fellow colonial minister and the premier colonial historian of the time, which was finished with much help from Experience Mayhew. The piece is entitled: *Some Account of those English Ministers Who Have Successively Presided Over the Work of Gospelizing the Indians on Martha's Vineyard, and the Adjacent Islands*. The title is a fitting description of this biographical work of four generations of Mayhew ministers in Martha's Vineyard: Governor Thomas Mayhew Senior, who purchased Martha's Vineyard and later lived and ministered there; the Reverend Thomas Mayhew Junior, who made initial contact and set the tone of the ministry among the Wampanoag; the Reverend John, Thomas Mayhew Junior's youngest son; and the Reverend Experience, John's eldest and the aforementioned author of *Indian Converts*. - Summary by Eric Schievenin

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